

Message Text

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73

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-11 INR-10 LAB-06

NSAE-00 RSC-01 SIL-01 CU-04 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 L-03

NSC-10 PA-03 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-15 NIC-01 OMB-01 SY-10

AID-20 PC-04 OPR-02 RSR-01 /150 W

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R 012235Z AUG 73

FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0444

C O N F I D E N T I A L GUATEMALA 3711

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT PINS

SUBJECT: SITUATION REPORT ON TEACHERS' STRIKE

REF: GUATEMALA 3639

SUMMARY: TEACHERS' STRIKE CONTINUES TO BE LARGELY IN EFFECT, ALTHOUGH GOG CLAIMS THAT TEACHERS RETURNING TO WORK IN MANY AREAS. TEACHERS' LEADERS MET WITH MINISTER OF DEFENSE ON JULY 30 TO REITERATE THEIR NEW WAGE DEMAND OF 25 PC INCREASE (ORIGINAL DEMAND WAS 50 PC). DEMONSTRATIONS HAVE STOPPED, BUT SAN CARLOS UNIVERSITY FACULTIES OF MEDICINE, LAW, AND HUMANITIES ARE ON STRIKE. AFTER SMALL DEMONSTRATIONS OVER WEEKEND, SITUATION HAS BECOME FAR LESS TENSE THAN LAST WEEK, BUT OUTCOME REMAINS IN DOUBT. END SUMMARY.

1. TEACHERS AND THEIR STUDENT AND LABOR ALLIES ATTEMPTED TO CONTINUE PUBLIC DEMONSTRATIONS OVER WEEKEND, BUT EFFORTS WERE THWARTED BY NATIONAL POLICE RIOT SQUAD. LIBERAL USE OF TEAR GAS, NIGHT STICKS, AND DETENTION REMAINED THE ONLY FORCE EMPLOYED. MONDAY, JULY 30, TEACHERS' LEADERS ((FNM) MET WITH MINISTER OF DEFENSE GENERAL FAUSTO RUBIO TO REITERATE THEIR FALL-BACK OFFER OF 25 PC WAGE INCREASE FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLTEACHERS AND TO
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ASK RUBIO TO SERVE AS INTERMEDIARY. RUBIO ACCEPTED

TEACHERS BUT MADE NO PROMISES.

2. WHILE PUBLIC DEMONSTRATIONS CEASED, MOVEMENT TO SUPPORT TEACHERS AT SAN CARLOS UNIVERSITY (USC) GATHERS MOMENTUM. HUMANITIES, LAW, AND MEDICINE FACULTIES ARE NOW IN STRIKE. MEDICAL STUDENT STRIKE AFFECTS OPERATION OF GOG NATIONAL HOSPITALS, BUT OTHER STOPPAGES ONLY AFFECT USC. VICE MINISTER OF INTERIOR SUMMONED USC RECTOR RAFAEL CUEVAS DEL CID FOR INTERVIEW IN WHICH CUEVAS WAS WARNED THAT GOG WOULD NOT PERMIT "SUBVERSIVE PLOT BEHIND TEACHERS' STRIKE" TO SUCCEED AND ADVISED NOT TO JEOPARDIZE USC AUTONOMY BY SUPPORTING STRIKE. CUEVAS AND USC SUPERIOR COUNCIL LATER, IN PAID NEWSPAPER AD, DENOUNCED GOG POSITION TAKEN AT INTERVIEW AND ASSERTED THAT USC WOULD FREELY EXERCISE ITS CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS.

3. STRIKE ITSELF APPEARS TO REMAIN LARGELY IN EFFECT, ALTHOUGH CONFLICTING REPORTS ARE CIRCULATING. GOG CLAIMS THAT HALF OF STRIKING TEACHERS HAVE RETURNED TO WORK IN GUATEMALA CITY AND THAT IN RURAL AREAS STRIKE HAS ONLY BEEN "PARTIAL" IN 102 (OF 325) MUNICIPALITIES. GOG ADMITS THAT STRIKE FULLY EFFECTIVE IN 70 MUNICIPALITIES. OUR SOURCES INDICATE THAT STRIKE REMAINS LARGELY EFFECTIVE IN CAPITAL, QUEZALTENANGO, AND OTHER MAJOR CITIES, WHILE IN WHOLLY RURAL MUNICIPALITIES TEACHERS ARE RETURNING TO WORK. GOG HAS MAINTAINED POSITION THAT TEACHERS NOT ON THE JOB JULY 31 WILL NOT BE PAID FOR ENTIRE MONTH OF JULY. THIS HAS PROBABLY INFLUENCED MANY TEACHERS TO RETURN TO WORK.

COMMENT: GOG'S CARE IN AVOIDING SERIOUS VIOLENCE HAS PROBABLY PAID OFF AND POTENTIAL DANGER TO PUBLIC SECURITY BY STRIKE SEEMS TO HAVE PASSED ITS PEAK. IF STUDENTS AT USC DO NOT MOUNT MORE ATTEMPTS AT DEMONSTRATIONS, THIS ASPECT OF PROBLEM MAY BE ENTIRELY OVER. TEACHERS' SOFTENING OF POSITION OF LEVEL OF WAGE INCREASE HAS OFFERED GOG OPPORTUNITY TO GIVE THEM SLIGHTLY BIGGER PAY RAISE, PERHAPS AT EXPENSE OF SOME OTHER NEW BENEFIT. GOVERNMENT WILL PROBABLY DECIDE IN NEXT FEW DAYS WHETHER IT MUST MAKE CONCESSIONS AFTER IT HAS

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EVALUATED REAL EFFECTIVENESS OF STRIKE.
BOWDLER

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